

COMMEMORATING THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the dark day 34 years ago this week in which Turkey illegally invaded the island of Cyprus. I rise in honor of the thousands of Cypriots who lost their lives or whose fate remains unknown, and in honor of the hundreds of thousands who were exiled from their homes. I would like to share my sympathy for their losses as well as my hope for a brighter, peaceful future for the island. The 34 unjust years of occupation must come to an end.

July 20, 1974 marks the beginning of a tragic era in Cypriot history. The Turkish invasion and occupation of the northern region of Cyprus has proved an affront to human rights and the rule of law. Hundreds of thousands of Greek Cypriots have suffered serious abuses of fundamental rights and freedoms. Their property has been illegally seized, their land has been settled, and many of their religious and cultural treasures have been damaged, destroyed, or illegally transferred abroad.

Turkey's military hold over northern Cyprus has persisted over three decades despite condemnation by the international community and nearly 100 U.N. resolutions requesting the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the island, the return of Greek Cypriot refugees to their homes and properties and above all, respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus. Indeed, I authored a resolution which passed the House in 1995 calling for the demilitarization of Cyprus. While Turkey is a friend and ally of the United States, the time has come for Ankara to relinquish its grasp on Cyprus. Enough is enough.

Recent events have raised hopes for both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Cyprus' accession to the European Union in 2004 was pivotal in the processes of integration and mutual development. The Turkish Cypriot population of over 90,000 benefit daily from rapidly increasing per capita income and the Government of Cyprus' provision of free education and medical and social services. In sum, the Government of Cyprus has provided nearly one billion dollars in tangible benefits to the Turkish Cypriot community. Along with hundreds of thousands of crossings between the Turkish occupied zone and the rest of the Republic of Cyprus, this progress has contributed to an environment of increasing trust and cooperation in which a peacefully negotiated solution may be pursued.

Since his election in February 2008, President of Cyprus Demetris Christofias has made resolution of the Cyprus problem his top priority and principal concern. He has reached out to Turkish Cypriot leader Mr. Mehmet Talat and called on him to cooperate face to face in order to implement a solution that honors relevant U.N. Security Council Resolutions, the High Level Agreements of 1977, 1979 and July 8, 2006 and the values and fundamental principles on which the European Union is founded.

In March, President Christofias and Mr. Talat agreed to establish a number of Working

Groups and Technical Committees as stipulated in the July 8 Agreement. The House of Representatives expressed its full support in H. Res. 405, which I cosponsored, for these actions as the ground on which to prepare for new comprehensive negotiations leading to Cyprus' reunification within a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation.

After several meetings earlier this year between the two parties and in the spirit of the opening in April of a symbolic crossing through the U.N.-controlled buffer zone in Nicosia, the world's last divided capital, I am proud to report that tomorrow, President Christofias and Mr. Talat will meet again to undertake the final review of the Working Groups and Technical Committees.

I ask each of my colleagues in the House to join me in support of this positive effort to realize full-fledged negotiations. We must urge Turkey to respect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of all citizens of Cyprus while exhibiting the political will that would enable a solution which will bring peace, prosperity and a better future for all the citizens of a united Cyprus.

ANNIVERSARY OF CAPITOL
POLICE DEATHS

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, every morning when I go in to work, I pass by a plaque honoring Detective John Gibson and Officer Jacob Chestnut on the spot where they were killed, 10 years ago today. It's a quiet hallway today: Down the hall you can hear the sounds of visitors to the Capitol, and a few feet away, the work of the Majority Leader's Office goes on every day.

What a shock to think that that hallway could be filled with gunshots and blood—to know that our Capitol, the most sacred space in our democracy, could be filled with violence. But what a saving grace to know that, every day, we are surrounded by brave men and women who will stand in the way of violence, even at the cost of their own lives. Detective Gibson and Officer Chestnut died doing just about the most worthwhile thing one human being can do for another: shielding the vulnerable—and yes, that includes every single one of us in this Chamber.

Detective Gibson and Officer Chestnut deserve every tribute they've been given: lying in honor under the Capitol dome; yesterday's words dedicated to their memory; today's moment of silence. But we know that what they did, every member of the Capitol Police—and every law enforcement officer—stands ready to do. We honor Detective Gibson and Officer Chestnut not because they were unique in their sacrifice, but because their willingness to sacrifice was so typical—typical of all the best in those who wear the badge.

Edmund Burke wrote that "Good order is the foundation of all things." It is certainly the foundation of everything that happens in this building. Let us thank those men and women who risk their lives to give us order, safety, freedom from fear. And let us keep their families in our thoughts, today and every day—especially their wives, Evelyn Gibson and Wendy Wenling Chestnut.

Without such brave officers, the work of this building—and the work of our democracy—wouldn't last a day.

HONORING RYAN SLANCZKA

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Ryan Slanczka of Liberty, Missouri. Ryan is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1397, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Ryan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Ryan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Ryan Slanczka for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING DEBRA BROWN
STEINBERG

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor and recognize the tireless efforts of Debra Brown Steinberg on behalf of the families of victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks against our country.

For the past 7 years, Ms. Steinberg has worked passionately as an advocate for these families and to ensure they are treated equally, regardless of their respective citizenship or immigration status. She has played a significant role in drafting and implementing various bills to benefit 9/11 families including New York State's September 11th Victims and Families Relief Act, the September 11th Family Humanitarian Relief and Patriotism Act and the September 11th Victims Compensation Fund. In addition, I have had the pleasure of working closely with Ms. Steinberg and the Department of Homeland Security to allow eligible spouses and children of 9/11 victims to receive humanitarian parole and remain in the United States.

Of course, all of her efforts have been praiseworthy and her persistence in seeing that these families are taken care of is truly remarkable. On behalf of the 9/11 families, many of which are constituents of mine, I salute Debra Steinberg for her devotion and positive contributions to their lives.

TRIBUTE TO MILTON GRANT

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker I rise today to celebrate the life of an icon in the